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## **FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS WASHINGTON, D.C. MAN OF INTERSTATE SEX TRAFFICKING OF 14-YEAR-OLD CHILD AND 19-YEAR-OLD ADULT**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Jaron Brice, a 27-year-old Washington, D.C. man, has been convicted by a federal jury in the District of Columbia on nine counts related to his illegal sex trafficking operation that involved the prostitution and sexual assault of females as young as 14 years old, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Kenneth L. Wainstein announced today.

Brice, also known as “Jaron,” “Jay,” “Jay Bird,” and “Daddy,” was convicted late Tuesday on one count of Sex Trafficking of a Child, two counts of Transportation of a Minor Across State Lines for Purposes of Prostitution, one Count of Transportation of a Person Across State Lines for Purposes of Prostitution, three counts of First Degree Child Sexual Abuse, and two counts of Pandering.

Brice faces a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison on sex trafficking of a child conviction, a mandatory minimum of five years for the transportation of a minor charge, a term of supervised release for life, a \$250,000 fine and restitution. The defendant will also have to register as a sex offender for life. Sentencing is scheduled for May 12, 2006.

The government argued that beginning in March 2004 and continuing through May 17, 2005, Brice recruited females as young as 14 years of age to engage in prostitution for his own financial benefit. He caused these females to prostitute in Washington, D.C., and other locations, including Maryland, New York and Florida. He used emotional and physical violence, including armed threats, to ensure compliance with his rules. Brice also had sexual intercourse with one of his prostitutes, then 14 years old.

“Jaron Brice forced teenage girls into prostitution through threats and violence. The message from this conviction is simple: that the full assets of federal law enforcement will be aligned directly and without interruption against those who violate criminal trafficking laws and sexually exploit minors. We in law enforcement are committed to doing all we can to protect our most valuable asset – our children – from the scourge of prostitution,” said Assistant Attorney General Fisher. “Operations such as Innocence Lost help us identify, prosecute and punish the criminals who engage in these crimes.”

United States Attorney Wainstein stated, “As this case demonstrates, we will spare no effort to pursue, prosecute, and punish those depraved individuals who sexually abuse our youth and treat them as commodities in the sex trade.”

The conviction arose out of the efforts of the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force and the Department of Justice’s Innocence Lost initiative. Formed in November 2004, the goals of the D.C. Human Trafficking Task Force are to identify domestic and international labor and sex

trafficking victims – including juveniles who are forced into prostitution – and to provide services for the victims and aggressively prosecute the traffickers. The task force, which is chaired by the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, is made up of over 15 governmental agencies and 21 non-governmental agencies in the D.C. area.

The Innocence Lost Initiative was developed in the spring of 2003, after the Violent Crimes and Major Offenders Section of the FBI, in partnership with the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, increased efforts to address the growing problem of children forced into prostitution. The Innocence Lost Initiative has resulted in more than 139 open investigations, 505 arrests, 60 complaints, 70 indictments and 67 convictions in both federal and state judicial systems.

The case was investigated by agents of the FBI, investigators from the U.S. Attorney's Office, members of the Metropolitan Police in Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Marshals Service. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sharon Marcus-Kurn of the District of Columbia and Trial Attorney Myesha Bryden of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Criminal Division.

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